

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 AMMAN 009733

SIPDIS

S/CT FOR SHORE AND SALAZAR ALSO FOR NCTC

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PTER](#) [ASEC](#) [JO](#)

SUBJECT: JORDAN: 2005 COUNTRY REPORT ON TERRORISM

REF: STATE 193439

1. As requested reftel, post provides below its recommended text for the Jordan section of the Global Terrorism Report.

2. Jordan continued its strong support for efforts to combat terrorism in 2005. The Government of Jordan has an important interest in defeating Al-Qaeda and similar groups, and has supported forums for tolerance and pro-coexistence religious education during the last year. The GOJ aggressively pursued the network of fugitive Jordanian terrorist Abu Mus,ab al-Zarqawi, who is deemed responsible for attacks in Jordan and Iraq, including the November 9 hotel bombings in Amman that killed 63 people, and the August 19 rocket attack in Aqaba, Jordan that also impacted in Eilat, Israel. The GOJ publicly condemned terrorist acts throughout the world, introduced tightened security measures, and began drafting new anti-terror legislation. Jordanian security forces disrupted numerous terrorist plots during the year, including several that targeted U.S. interests, while Jordan's State Security Court, which has purview over terrorism-related cases, processed a heavy caseload, many of which involved Zarqawi-affiliated suspects.

3. In mid-November in response to the hotel bombings, members of the royal family including Queen Rania and Princess Basma, led a series of street protests, vigils, and marches against terrorism; the largest march drawing approximately 200,000 people. King Abdullah continued to speak out forcefully against terrorism and Islamic extremism. Jordan worked to promote religious tolerance, interfaith dialogue, and shared values between civilizations with a number of initiatives, including the International Islamic Conference in Amman in July. In December, the King called on the Organization of the Islamic Conference to dedicate itself to combating extremism.

4. The November 9 hotel bombings, the country's worst-ever terrorist attacks, left many Jordanians shocked. The targeting of a wedding reception in particular eroded support for Zarqawi and al-Qaeda within Jordan. Surveys taken in the weeks after the bombings show that approximately 80 percent of those polled had negative opinions of al Qaeda and that 90 percent believed al Qaeda was a terrorist organization; approximately 65 percent said their views had changed as a result of the November 9 bombings. The televised confession of would-be suicide bomber Sajida al-Rishawi, part of the GOJ's campaign to rally average citizens against Islamic terrorism, also served to reduce support for Zarqawi and Islamic extremists.

5. The State Security Court moved forward on several high-profile al-Qaeda-related terrorism cases in 2005. The case against 13 men accused of plotting a chemical bomb attack in Amman in April 2004 continued in 2005 as reputed cell leader Azmi Jayusi threatened court officials and admitted meeting with Abu Mus,ab al Zarqawi in preparation for the attack. In November, prosecutors demanded the death penalty for the plotters. Four of the accused, including Zarqawi, are being tried in absentia. Zarqawi is also being tried in absentia for a December 2004 attack at the Karama-Trebil border crossing, and was already sentenced to death by the SSC for the 2002 murder of U.S. diplomat Laurence Foley in 2004. In November, the SSC charged Muammar Jaghbir with plotting subversive acts for the 2003 attack against the Jordanian Embassy in Baghdad that killed 17. Jaghbir, who was arrested in Iraq in 2004 by U.S. forces and handed over to Jordanian authorities, is also standing trial for the assassination of Laurence Foley. In September the SSC sentenced twelve Islamist militants to prison terms ranging from one and a half to three years, falling short of the maximum penalties -- death or 15 years of hard labor -- for plotting terrorist attacks against the U.S. and Israeli embassies. During their sentencing, the defendants hailed the September 11 al-Qaeda attacks on the U.S., and claimed that the verdict would not dissuade them from pursuing the path of jihad.

6. Several non-al Qaeda-related SSC cases were heard in 2005. The highly contentious trial of more than 100 Jordanians charged with involvement in the 2002 Ma'an riots, which left six dead, began in early 2005. Ninety-five of the defendants are being tried in absentia. The main defendant in the case, Abu Sayyaf, retracted his earlier confession claiming he was

tortured and forced to confess. In January, the SSC sentenced two men to two and one-half year prison terms for plotting attacks against foreign diplomats in Amman, and in October the SSC sentenced five Jordanians to prison terms ranging from one year to five years hard labor for plotting attacks in Israel and against tourists in Jordan, and another three men to five years imprisonment for plotting attacks on liquor stores and tourists in Aqaba. In November, the SSC said it would re-examine guilty verdicts it had issued against seven militants convicted of a bungled terror conspiracy to use poison gas against American and Israeli tourists during Jordan's millennium celebrations in December 1999 after an appeals court ordered a retrial on the grounds that the plotters may be covered under a general amnesty issued by King Abdullah.

17. In mid-November the GOJ proposed new anti-terror legislation that will set harsh penalties for anyone who condones or supports acts of terror. The proposed bill, still in the drafting stage, will allow authorities to hold terror suspects indefinitely, and may require Jordanian citizens who rent apartments or office space to non-Jordanians to report specific, personal details about tenants to the authorities within 48 hours of signing a lease.

18. Border security remains a top concern of Jordanian officials. Since the Aqaba rocket attack in August, the GOJ has enforced strict security measures at the Karama-Trebil border crossing, including thorough manual searches of all vehicles and persons attempting to enter Jordan. Additionally, Jordanian authorities have issued a zero tolerance policy towards fuel smuggling. Jordan and Iraq signed a security agreement establishing a committee that will exchange information on terrorists, organized crime, and border infiltration.

19. In the wake of the November 9 hotel bombings, Jordanian Public Security Department Commanders met with representatives of hotels, banks, restaurants and tourist sites to discuss increasing and adopting security measures to prevent future attacks. Many hotels, shopping malls and other major institutions have installed metal detectors, and electronic surveillance systems. In response to King Abdullah's call for a strategy to preempt terrorist plots, 23 Jordanian academics have joined to form an NGO called "The Scientific Society to Combat Terrorism." The Society's members will serve as scientific and technical advisors for security services charged with protecting Jordan from terrorism, and will train customs officials on how to uncover forged documents, and combat smuggling.

110. The Embassy point of contact for the report is poloff Mark Petzolt. Tel: (962) (6) 590-6594. Unclassified e-mail address: Petzoltma@state.gov.
RUBINSTEIN